

# THE USAGE OF FEMINITIVES IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGE GROUPS

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In this article the author makes a deep analysis of the peculiarities of usage of feminitives in different languages and understanding of how feminitives are used in a common culture and what are the differences between the status of feminitives in different groups of languages and how this can affect the international communication and translations. The author analyses a poll organized where any person can select their native language or the one they know at an advanced level and answer some questions about their language.

**Key words:** *feminitives; feminist movement; international communication; culture.*

For the last few years' feminist movement has influenced not only political and social life but also languages. That is how *feminitives* which are defined as words of the feminine gender, denoting profession, job, specialization, classes, etc. appeared almost in all languages [1]. For example, 'businesswoman', 'authoress', 'директорка', 'авторка', 'режиссёрка', 'хирургиня', 'la presidenta' (испанский, м.р. – 'presidente'), 'sénatrice' (французский, м.р. – 'sénateur'), 'autorka' (польский, м.р. – 'autor'), 'policewoman' [2]. Some languages can not adopt the idea of the usage of feminitives. Some languages used them as a slang form, and in some – it is a grammatical and lexical norm of languages. However, languages are also united in groups according to a list of significant features and the usage of feminitives can also be the significant feature of a certain group and can affect international communication.

The analysis was based on the answers to 8 main questions that can describe the usage of feminitives in the different language group. The results of it are reflected in the pie charts.

## Question 1. Are feminitives common in your culture?

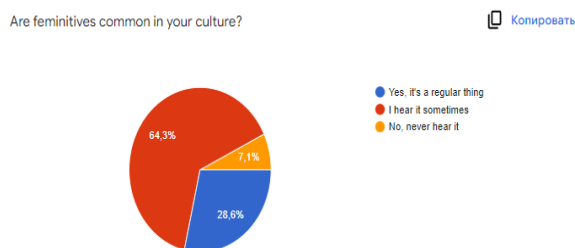


Fig 1. Are feminitives common in your culture?

64,3 % of responders from Germanic, Baltic, Slavic, and Finno-Ugric groups said that they heard it sometimes. Meanwhile 26,6 % said that they hear

it all the time, and this percent related to the Italic group of languages (mostly Italian and French). 7,1% related to responders whose native language is Chinese.

### Question 2. How did feminitives appear in your language(-s)?

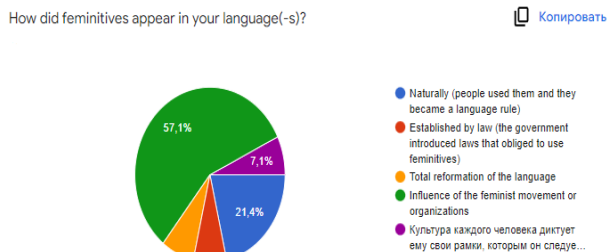


Fig 2. How did feminitives appear in your language(-s)?

57,1 % of responders answered that feminitives appeared in their language due to the feminist movement and that is mostly Germanic, Baltic, and Finno-Ugric groups. However, concerning this question different languages have different experiences. For example, in Sweden feminitives were both ensured in language by the feminist movement and laws. Some languages have a history of the total reformation of the language (Norwegian), but it is possible to say that more or fewer laws or reforms were adopted by the force of the feminist movement. 21,4% of respondents from Italic and Slavic groups said that feminitives appeared naturally. Other 21,5% , as it was mentioned, consist of languages in which cases of adopting feminitive are different and also some other specific languages such as Chinese. Feminitives appeared in their languages naturally. Other 21,5% have chosen other options, but these are separated languages from groups below and or single languages from other groups that were not mentioned (Chinese).

### Question 3. Where can they be used in your culture?

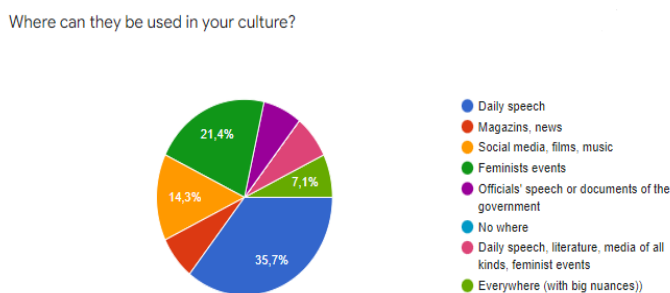


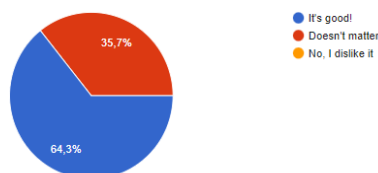
Fig 3. Where can they be used in your culture?

According to the statistics in all groups of languages feminitives are used mostly in daily speech, social media, and social environment. In Italic and Finno-Ugric groups, feminitives have official status. It is crucial to notice that

no one has marked a “nowhere” option, which means the wide spread of feminitives around the world.

**Question 4. What do you think about using feminitives in speech while talking with people of other cultures (during some performance/ while writing essays or documents that can be heard/read by people of other culture)?**

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*Fig 4.* What do you think about using feminitives in speech while talking with people of other cultures (during some performance/ while writing essays or documents that can be heard/read by people of other culture)?

64,3% of respondents marked a positive attitude towards feminitives in diverse spheres of life that can be seen or heard by people of other languages. 35,7% of respondents marked that for them it doesn't matter and mostly it is respondents with Slavic or Germanic native languages. No one marked their negative effect.

**Question 5. Are there any difficulties with understanding and using feminitives in different spheres of life?**

For Italic and Finno-Ugric groups, it is easy to use feminitives, as they are used frequently and freely in their languages. For the Slavic group, there are some divisions: some languages (e.g. Polish, Serbian) have developed a structure of using feminitives, but some (e.g. Russian, Belarusian) have some difficulties in using them, especially while writing. For other language groups, it is either personal or not difficult at all.

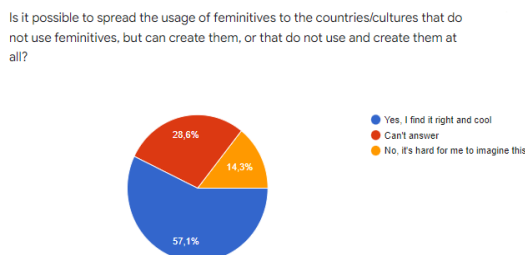
**Question 6. In your opinion, how do feminitives affect communication and understanding people generally? What about news and translation into different languages (pay attention to languages that have no feminitives if you know any)?**

In all groups of languages, respondents mark the importance of feminitives in all as it makes speech clearer and shows respect to other people. Some people mention that before translating and communicating it is rather essential to learn how feminitives are used in this or that language as different languages use different forms.

**Question 7. What about the usage of feminitives in news and translations into other languages (pay attention to the languages that have no feminitives as a grammatical or a lexical form if you know any)?**

In all languages, respondents paid attention to the context and the atmosphere of the country where news is broadcast with the translation. However, the respondents show a positive attitude toward using feminitives correctly in these cases.

**Question 8. Is it possible to spread the usage of feminitives to the countries/cultures that do not use feminitives, but can create them, or that do not use and create them at all?**



*Fig 5.* Is it possible to spread the usage of feminitives to the countries/cultures that do not use feminitives, but can create them, or that do not use and create them at all?

57,1% of respondents marked that it is a good idea to spread feminitives. Especially related to the Finno-Ugric group as its languages have a positive experience of the spread of feminitives by laws and social and political movements. 28,6% said that they can't answer and 14,3% said that it is impossible which is mostly related to Slavic languages and other minorities of the respondents of other languages.

To conclude, the research shows that in Italic languages feminitives are the natural feature of the languages that are spread and used everywhere. In Finno-Ugric, Baltic, and Germanic groups feminitives appeared by the influence of laws, reforms, and feminist movements in countries. For this group of languages, it is harder to use them freely and in all cases, but they achieved a lot in using feminitives and have already managed the positive effect of feminitives in their culture. The most difficult group to analyse is Slavic as this group has a great diversity of languages and history. Each language has a unique view on feminitives which is why it is hard to point out a list of peculiarities for this group. Other languages that were mentioned in the survey have specific structures of the language (e.g. Chinese) and need to be studied more.

The vigour of feminitives is that they are used in all languages now and their usage facilitates creating a positive attitude towards them around people. Moreover, according to the analysis feminitives can be adopted by other languages, if they are used properly and wisely while spreading.

### Библиографические ссылки

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